

Message from the Chief

Chief's Memo – March 27, 2006

Budget Season

Budget season begins today! I will be attending my first Senate Budget Hearing this morning. Being prepared for "budget season" is every bit as important as being prepared for "fire season." In fact, the two are intertwined. The degree to which we can be prepared to carry out our mission is largely affected by the funding we receive.



As you all know, I have spent my first few months visiting the Units, personally observing our state of readiness, and the condition of our infrastructure. I have listened to many of you discuss your concerns about our current fiscal conditions. Some of you have written to me and many of you have expressed your concerns in other ways. The budgetary condition we are in did not happen overnight, and I do not expect it to be reversed overnight.

However, I have heard you. I have seen things first hand which are of concern to me. As a staff, we have begun looking at short term and long term solutions to our current fiscal condition. None of the solutions come without a cost. We have met with the Department of Finance and have made several requests for budgetary relief. I have discussed these issues with Secretary Chrisman, and we have begun having discussions higher up in the Administration. While, I cannot share the specific recommendations in "Significant Issue Reports" (SIR's) or "Governor's Office Action Requests" (GOAR's) prepared by the Department, I can tell you that we are trying to educate the Department of Finance, the Administration, and the Legislature as to our current and future fiscal condition and needs.

We will be engaging in discussions about our mission, legislative responsibilities, legal responsibilities, public safety, and moral obligations. I will report back to you the degree to which we make progress or not. Wish us luck.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Grijalva". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Ruben Grijalva, Chief
Acting Director

Office of State Fire Marshal

Staff has completed the Fire and Life Safety Inspection of the Resources Building and expects to have the report completed this week. Staff participated in the State Capitol Evacuation drill and tabletop exercise last week. Pipeline Safety personnel met with representatives from the National Association of State Fire Marshals to finalize plans for our upcoming State Pipeline conference which will be held in Monterey this April. Pipeline safety staff is in Bakersfield this week conducting the SFM Spring Workshop for the pipeline industry. Fire engineering staff is planning the fireworks training class for this year. Further information regarding the times and locations of the classes will be available soon.

Cooperative Fire

Staff met with Regional Council of Rural Counties Resource Committee representatives on Thursday, March 16 to review draft Amador program policy. Staff will make an Amador program presentation to the BOF Resources committee at their April meeting. Staff completed and distributed the FY 06/07 preliminary rate letter on March 22. Rates will be updated as more current information is received. Coop. and Budgets staff have received approval to distribute the FY06/07 Administrative Rate. Co-op staff is working with HQ, Region and Unit staff to coordinate new Schedule A contracts in San Diego and Placer Counties. Coop staff met with Contracts Office staff last week to develop "New Generation" FC-90 that will better meet the needs of local cooperators. Draft will be sent to Dept. of General Services for approval.

Aviation Management

The flight operations chief attended the annual Helicopter Association International (HAI) convention, and met with manufacturers including Agusta Westland, Eurocopter, Sikorsky, and Bell to discuss the helicopter replacement program. In addition, the HAI convention provided a forum to recruit fire pilots and air operations officers, and collect current information on automatic flight following, fixed tanks for retardant application, and passenger restraint systems. The safety department conducted its inaugural Aviation Safety Action Group meeting at McClellan. Attendees included AMU staff, contract pilots, and CDF field representatives. Subjects addressed included, safety program goals, 2005 safety trends and analysis, aircraft maintenance, airspace coordination, communications, and aircraft stress and fatigue. During its spirited discussion, the group delivered recommendations designed to proactively maintain a high level of safety.

Resource Management

Prop 40 grant proposals were due to the Prop 40 program manager in Sacramento on March 15. Prop 40 funds are used to reduce wildland hazardous fuel in 15 counties of the central Sierra. Non-profit organizations and non-federal agencies are eligible for Prop 40 funds. To date Sacramento has received 32 applications for Prop 40 community assistance grants (CAG) from five of the six Units of the Prop 40 eligible counties. The current total for CAG funds received

in Sacramento is over \$2 million dollars and will treat over 1,800 acres. The CAG fund request for this year is expected to be over \$2,610,000 with over \$300,000 funding portions of projects that went unfunded last year due to budgetary constraints. The current range of cost for CAG project for this year is from about \$300-4100 per acre with the average being just over \$1,100 per acre. Prop 40 funds are also likely to fund \$2,710,000 in California Forest Improvement Program project this year.

The Notice of Preparation for the Mendocino Redwood Company's (MRC) Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR) is out for a 30 day comment period, beginning March 10 and ending on April 10. MRC is currently working on a long term sustainable forest management plan that includes a Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Communities Conservation Plan. In total, these plans will provide for long term conservation of threatened and endangered species as well as natural communities existing on MRC lands. The public and agencies have been invited to submit comments in regard to the potential for MRC's management to cause significant environmental impacts and to suggest alternatives for consideration in the PTEIR. All comments must be received by CDF on April 10, 2006 at 5:00 P.M. A second scoping session has been scheduled for March 28 at Ukiah Valley Conference Center from 6 to 9 p.m. at 200 South School Street in Ukiah.

Human bones were recently unearthed at Ishi Camp during a waterline trenching operation. CDF Archaeologists assisted camp manager Walt Williams with action to comply with procedures in law. Immediate notification was made to the County Coroner, the Native American Heritage Commission, and the local tribal groups. Local tribal groups met last Friday and held a reburial ceremony.

CDF is organizing training sessions for Native Americans to discuss CDF procedures and the role of Native Americans during the project review process. This training was requested by CDF's Native American Advisory Council to explain the context of project notifications they receive and encourage more widespread participation. Two sessions are scheduled. The first will be on April 26, hosted by the Sherwood Valley Band of the Pomo tribe. The second session will be May 5th at the Redding Rancheria.

Timber crew fieldwork has been completed on the Soquel Demonstration State Forest. Over 530 plots were completed and data is currently being entered and numbers crunched. Thanks to all of you who provided a helping hand.